

Rep. Peter Welch of Vermont and Rep. Paul Hodes of New Hampshire yesterday introduced legislation to fund conservation efforts in the Upper Connecticut River Valley.

The Upper Connecticut River Partnership Act of 2009 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to invest \$1 million per year in the Connecticut River Joint Commission's efforts to protect the river's watershed. As New England's largest ecosystem, this river and its watershed have long driven the economy and culture of the Vermont and New Hampshire towns and cities on either bank.

"From Canaan to Brattleboro, the Connecticut River has long served as a key recreational, economic and cultural artery for our two states. We must do all we can to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy these waters and the entire Connecticut River Valley watershed," Welch said.

"Protecting the Connecticut River is vital to both our states' natural environment," Hodes said. "Its preservation is critical to local tourism, local economies, and to ensure that future generations will enjoy its natural beauty."

The Upper Connecticut River Partnership Act of 2009 was also introduced in the Senate yesterday by Senators Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Senators Judd Gregg and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire.